

Testimony before the Council of the District of Columbia
Committee of the Whole
Wednesday, April 2, 2008

**“Public Hearing on the Mayor’s Proposed FY 2009 Budget Request for the
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education”**

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Deputy Mayor for Education

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am here today to testify regarding the FY 2009 budget for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. The budget for my office reflects significant investment in the District’s children and youth, allowing us to ensure that our overall education reform agenda is coordinated and implemented successfully and to meet the needs of our students in a comprehensive, collaborative approach.

Mission of the DME

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education continues to function as the Mayor’s chief advisor and coordinator of education policy in the District. Our mission directly supports the Mayor’s vision for dramatically improving our public schools: marshalling District resources – public, private, and community – to improve the educational processes and outcomes for all the District’s students to prepare them for successful futures. We do this through the four main functions that I discussed in detail last fall: acting as chief advisor to the Mayor on the District’s

education strategy; coordinating across educational institutions and city agencies for education-related initiatives; developing partnerships in support of public education initiatives; and providing leadership, oversight, and support for OSSE, OPEFM, and the Office of the Ombudsman.

1) Act as the chief advisor to the Mayor on the District's education strategy

Coordinating an overall District-wide educational strategy can best be described as keeping an eye on the big picture and end-goal of education reform. We work to ensure that all of our education agencies are focused on the Mayor's agenda and that their efforts are aligned and coordinated in order to maximize their impact on our students' educational achievement. The DME provides leadership, critical thinking, analysis, and linkages to other agencies that support various initiatives across the educational spectrum, early childhood through K-12, higher education and adult programs, and citywide educational facilities planning.

2) Coordinate across educational institutions and city agencies for education-related initiatives

The interagency coordination function of the DME is commonly referred to as the 'ICSIC work'. Key to what we do in this area is leading and overseeing the work of the Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC), though we have found that interagency coordination is also a core function that touches on nearly everything we do. It involves supporting and enhancing services and initiatives for students and families that address non-academic issues both inside and outside of the classroom, including school security, truancy, school health, reconnecting disconnected youth, and alternative education programs.

3) Develop partnerships in support of public education initiatives

Partnerships enhance opportunities for children and youth in schools and out-of-school and complement public investment in our education system. Our engagement of the private and non-profit sectors, including the business, higher education, and philanthropic communities, supports the development and utilization of new and existing resources for the benefit of children.

4) Provide leadership, oversight, and support for OSSE, OPEFM, and the Office of the Ombudsman

My office's centralized oversight of OSSE, OPEFM, and the Ombudsman is critical to ensuring that the Mayor's education reform efforts remain aligned across agencies. Each agency has a specific and important role to play, and my approach is to preserve some level of independence for their work while communicating and providing regular guidance and direction. My office continues to provide additional capacity and analysis, and we partner with those agencies to move forward various projects, including the student data warehouse project and a city-wide truancy plan.

FY 2009 Budget Overview

The FY 2009 budget for this office reflects our recent organizational changes, support for our core functions, and significant investment in key initiatives of ICSIC. Overall, the proposed FY 2009 budget for the DME is \$6,917,325, with 16 FTEs. Though this is an increase from the approved FY 2008 budget of \$2,442,325 and 12 FTEs, the increase primarily reflects a shift in the source of funding and additional staffing allocation for the new work of ICSIC.

FY 2009 funding is distributed among three activities: Agency Oversight and Support, Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission (ICSIC), and the Office of the

Ombudsman for Public Education. The reorganization of the budget among these three activities provides more transparency to the budget and will allow us to better track the funding and performance among discrete functions.

Agency Oversight and Support makes up the central function of my office, including our education strategy, partnerships, and oversight functions, and involves the majority of the staff. This activity is budgeted at \$2,324,000, holding steady to our FY 2008 budget. While we have adjusted the work of the DME to reflect updated priorities and the more focused work agenda developed through our transition plan, we are essentially working within the same budget.

Our FY 2009 budget separates the funding allocated for support of ICSIC-related initiatives. The ICSIC activity is a new activity within the DME budget, with \$4,005,000 budgeted for this activity. Two million dollars of this funding will come from available carryover from the Integrated Services Fund. Budgeted funding will support the expanded roll-out of the DC START pilot project, training for staff and school-based personnel, and the implementation and monitoring of several evidence-based programs.

Finally, we are continuing funding for the Ombudsman office as a new separate activity line in the budget. The Ombudsman office is staffed with four personnel. Locating the Ombudsman in its own budget activity will allow the Ombudsman to operate in an independent manner within the Office of the DME, with some administrative support provided through the Agency Oversight and Support activity, and allow us to track its expenditures with increased transparency and accountability.

Initiatives of the DME

The major initiatives for the DME in Fiscal Year 2009 fall under the work of the ICSIC. We are about to embark on one of the most critical pieces of our education reform strategy – the implementation of progressive, collaborative, and evidence-based model programs and services in support of youth across the District. These initiatives will begin to address serious needs of our children that have long been left unaddressed in an effective manner, needs that relate to issues outside of school but significantly impact children’s success in the classroom.

This month, DC START will begin operating in two DCPS elementary schools. In the fall, we will expand the pilot project to include five additional schools, including one middle school. The expansion of this pilot will be done carefully and deliberately, and we will actively monitor the progress and results. Funding for the pilot will support all aspects – additional staffing, training and ongoing development, clinical supervision, consultant support, and ongoing technical support of the case management database. We also plan to hire a program director for the pilot to oversee and ensure the success of the expansion.

In addition to DC START, ICSIC will implement several evidence-based programs (EBPs) beginning later this year. While we have not yet made a final decision on which programs to implement, we are focusing on a limited number of key areas: school climate and safety, social and emotional development, and home visitation programs. In response to needs expressed by MPD officers, we plan to implement a training program for School Resource Officers to provide them with tools they can use in working in schools and with students. We are exploring which EBP models will have the most impact in the District. And we are assessing where gaps in services exist within the current home visitation programs to identify programs that could be

enhanced by introducing EBPs. Also, at the agency service delivery level, there is great potential in working closely with agencies to utilize ICSIC funding to fund and incubate innovative pilots in order to determine their effectiveness before supplanting existing practices.

Finally, we have included additional funding in the proposed budget to permit a possible expansion of the DC START pilot to additional schools in spring or fall 2009, depending on early results of the program, and rapid implementation of additional pilot programs during the course of the year. The Budget Request Act also contains a carryover provision to enable us to utilize this funding over multiple fiscal years if necessary.

In addition to the important new initiatives through ICSIC, my office will continue to engage in activities that span the District-wide education spectrum and impact schools and students in a systemic way. We are actively collaborating with both OSSE and DCPS to identify priority education initiatives that require additional capacity and analytical support provided by my office to achieve their objectives. Specifically, my office will focus on increasing the number of special programs, including arts-focused and bilingual education programs, in schools across the city and explore strategies to improve adult education and workforce training options available to District residents. Through our partnerships function, we will seek to leverage community resources to help us provide these expanded opportunities for our youth. Also, we will continue to lead the planning efforts to direct the utilization of the District's school buildings as educational and community assets. The first phase involves identifying and implementing community-supporting uses for the schools to be closed this summer as part of the Chancellor's Renew, Revitalize, and Reorganize initiative. While the first phase is ongoing, we have already begun planning for the next phase: utilizing the excess space in existing DCPS schools. This

effort will both reintroduce efficiency to our educational system and enable us to transform our schools into more supportive learning environments and centers of the community by hosting educational support, health services, early childhood, and adult education programs and through partnerships with libraries, neighborhood organizations, or community recreation programs.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that the proposed FY 2009 budget for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education reflects targeted investment in ensuring that our education reform efforts are successful. We serve as the high-level coordination and oversight to keep all of our agencies focused and moving forward, and we measure our progress frequently with an eye toward meeting the end-goal of improving educational outcomes for the District's children and youth. Through extensive interagency coordination, we provide the additional supports and services our students and schools need. And from a fiscal perspective, the DME operates with a lean, dynamic structure designed to meet the objectives of the Mayor, as I promised during the Council's oversight hearing on the DME transition last fall.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the proposed FY 2009 budget. I look forward to answering your questions.